

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

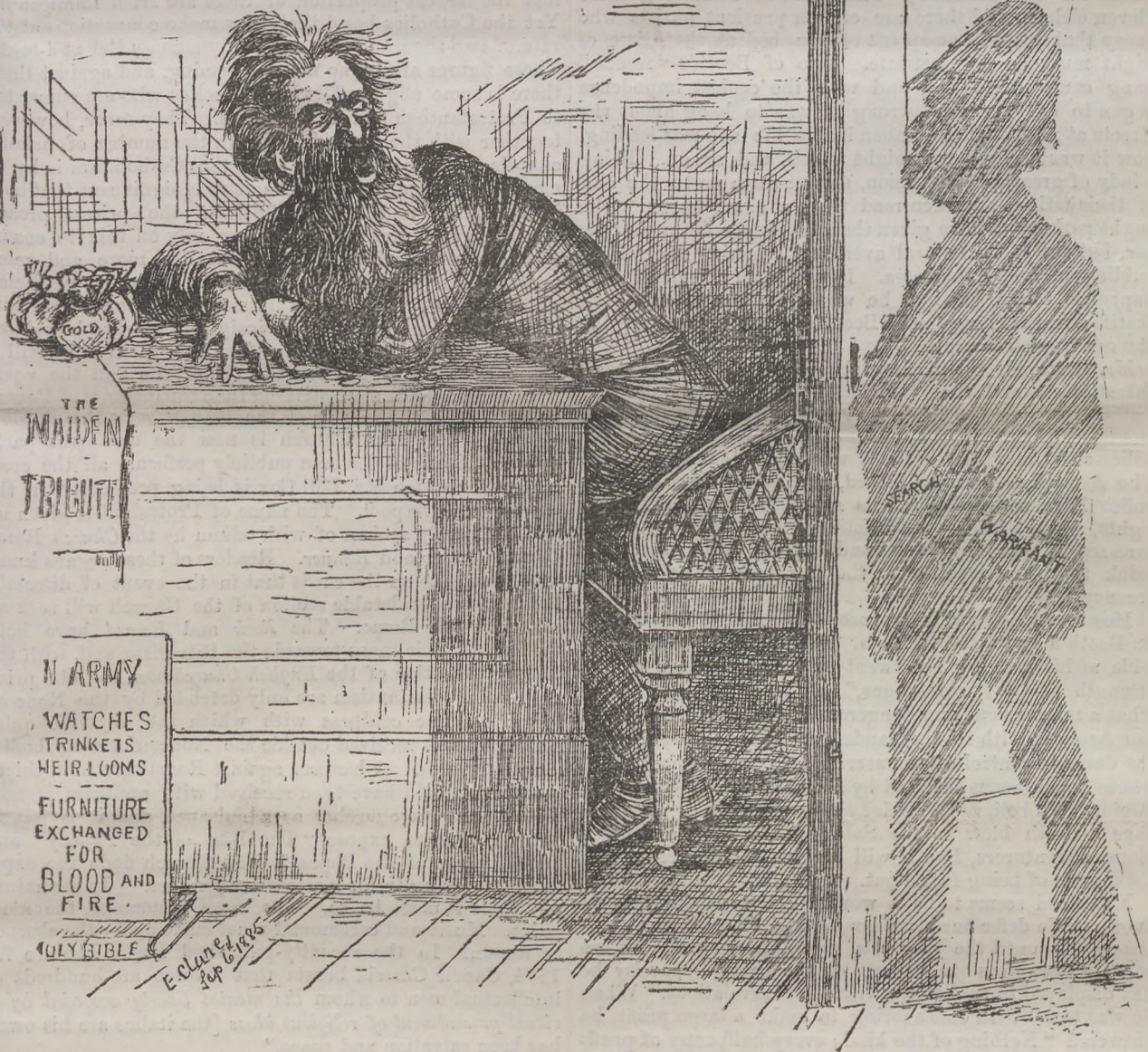
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SEPTEMBER 13, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

SALVATION
WAR CITY

BOOTH & CO.



COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.

BOOTH AT BOW STREET.

GENERAL BOOTH is a knowing old file, and he appears to have kept himself well in the background in connection with the Eliza Armstrong business, only rushing forward to ask for twenty thousand pounds when Mr. Stead's "revelations" had thoroughly fermented the public mind. But he is the despotic chief of the Salvation Army, the

supreme wirepuller of all the dancing figures in the "blood and fire" show; and we are entitled to believe that he was well acquainted with, and really responsible for, everything his "heir and successor in the Lord," Mr. Bramwell Booth, did in the case from beginning to end. The chief of the staff, as they grandiloquently call him, is figuring in the Bow Street dock; but it is Booth himself who is really standing there by proxy. We are not going to anticipate the verdict of the jury, or to prejudice the

case in any way. Our object is simply to take the public admissions of Mr. Bramwell Booth and Mr. Stead, and to see how they affect the Salvation Army and the methods of pious philanthropy.

Whether Eliza Armstrong was bought for the avowed object of prostitution, or abducted under false pretences, it is clear that she was taken and kept from her home by the Army and its friends. They knew her whereabouts, for they actually had her in their service at Paris when Mrs. Armstrong applied to the magistrate for assistance in discovering her daughter. They showed, therefore, it may be a very pious, but certainly a very shameful, contempt for the law, and the rights of parents. Mrs. Armstrong may or may not be all that Mr. Stead and Mr. Bramwell Booth have not scrupled to picture her; but it is not for them to exercise an irresponsible authority of deciding whether any mother is a proper person to have the custody of her own children. That is the office of the law, and if gushing or designing philanthropists are to exercise it, every parent in the kingdom is at once placed at their mercy.

What this sort of thing leads to is obvious. A lady friend of ours, only a few weeks ago, was waiting at King's Cross for the Holloway 'bus. It was something after eleven o'clock, and there are certain prurient purists who fancy that every woman out of her bed at that time of night must be a prostitute. Two of Booth's "rescue" gang came up to her, and with the coolest impudence began to tell her how wrong it was to hang about the streets at night, what an abominable life she was leading, how it was taking her straight to hell, and so on. Being a lady of great self-possession, she let them go to the end of their tether, and then read them a sharp lesson. She ought perhaps to have given them in charge for molesting her, but she had a natural aversion to mixing herself up publicly in such a business. If any male friend of hers happened to be passing, he would certainly have been justified in knocking the he-Boothite down, and leaving the she one to pick him up.

Mr. Bramwell Booth finds that the public are not all Salvationists, and that there are crowds of people who loathe and detest the Salvation Army and its latest achievements. He was obliged to evade the mob on leaving the police-court, and their hostility was probably an eye-opener. The Army has been so petted, the magistrates and the police have so winked at its gross violations of public rights, and the leaders of Christianity have so flattered and caressed it, that the General and his family have come to think they are superior to the law as well as to social decency.

However this Armstrong case terminates, it is bound to do Booth a great deal of harm. The public opened its eyes wide at his cadging for twenty thousand pounds on the strength of the "revelations," and it now begins to see what a mischievous and dangerous organisation the Salvation Army is, with its thousands of ignorant fanatics under the despotic control of an unscrupulous, self-seeking chief, whose policy seems inspired by Simon Peter, Barnum and Fagin. We believe this trial will be a dreadful, and perhaps a death blow to the Salvation Army. Like other pious adventurers, Booth will languish and perish from the disease of being found out.

Mr. Stead seems to us a worthy colleague for General Booth. We defer our criticism of his action in the Armstrong case until the jury has given its verdict, but we venture to express our disgust at the gross hypocrisy he has displayed in connection with the "revelations." When he was taxed with endeavoring to make a large profit, he answered "Nothing of the kind; every halfpenny of profit accruing from the sale of the special number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* will be devoted to the rescue work under the superintendence of our Chief Director of the Investigation." The Chief Director was also allowed to start a Fund for himself, to be spent at his good pleasure; and the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in another part of the paper, pressed the Fund upon the attention of his readers. Cash flowed in merrily to the tune of sixteen or seventeen hundred pounds; and this, with the profit from the "revelations," must have made a pretty plum. Now it turns out that *Mr. Stead and the Chief Director are one and the same person*. We suspected the fact all along. Could there be a better illustration of the morality which flourishes in the atmosphere of religion?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SPREAD OF POPERY.

No constant reader of the *Freethinker* will be in danger of supposing that we are, like Mr. Newdigate, afflicted with "Jesuit on the brain," or that, like the *English Churchman*, we think it necessary to continually chalk up "No Popery." We are as thoroughly convinced as was Carlyle that "Popery cannot come back, any more than Paganism can," yet, as observers of the times and constant readers of religious literature, we are also convinced both that Roman Catholicism and Ritualism, which in its issues is almost the same thing, are profiting by the decline of Evangelicalism in England. Colonel Ingersoll's words, "even now the Protestant churches are going to pieces, and when the shock of battle comes it will be mostly with the Church of Rome,"* may have greater application to America than to England. There the extensive landed property of the Catholic Church, and the solid vote of its Irish followers is already a menace to republican institutions.† At home, however, as shown in the current number of the *National Review*, the Catholic vote is increasingly important and Conservative. Since 1845, the number of Catholics in England has increased from 328,000 to 2,500,000. Doubtless the largest proportion of these are Irish immigrants. Yet the Catholics boast that they make conversions at the rate of two thousand a year, chiefly among the well-to-do. These figures are by no means alarming, and against them there is some slight offset of Catholics who are converted to Protestantism and Freethought. They serve, however, together with the large increase in the number of priests, chapels, sisterhoods, etc., to show that Catholicism is by no means on the decline. It is, moreover, significant that both in the pulpit and the confessional the priests preach "increase and multiply," and they rely on this to ensure their triumph while their adversaries more and more restrain their population. On the Continent no politician considers the pretensions of Rome a bugbear. Gambetta never hit the mark with truer insight than when he pointed to clericalism as "the enemy."‡ In Belgium it is still a life and death struggle between the priests and the party of freedom. Still more striking than the increase of Popery in England is the success of the Ritualists in the English Church. The High Church is now the dominant party and the Bishop of Lincoln publicly performs all the ceremonies for which Mr. Bell Cox is being prosecuted in the diocese of Liverpool. The name of Protestant is given up and constantly spoken of with odium by the *Church Times*, *Church Review* and *Banner*. Readers of these organs know that it is quite on the cards that in the event of disestablishment a considerable section of the Church will seek an alliance with Rome. The *Rock* and *Record* have both moderated their tones towards the Ritualists, and, with the trifling exception of the *English Churchman*, the old principles of Protestantism are only defended by the Nonconformists. The coldness with which the Wycliffe quincentenary was received outside the Nonconforming bodies illustrated this. A lecturer against Romanism who thirty years ago would have been received with applause is now regarded by the churches as a nuisance, and it is left to Freethinkers to expose "The Rise of the Papacy" and "The Crimes of the Popes." The Church finds the expediency of going in for "attractive services." In the nature of things it must be so. The more rottenness, the more paint. Music and ceremonial must make up for the absence of reason. In the recently-published Boyle Lecture for 1884, Canon Curteis boasts that "there are hundreds of intellectual men to whom the mental liberty accorded by a ritual presentment of religious ideas [the italics are his own] has been salvation and peace."

The case of Cardinal Newman illustrates where those must end who assume High Church principles and reason from them with consistent logic. The Church of Rome recognises its advantages in the spread of Ritualism, and articles on "The Conversion of England" in the *Dublin Review* and the *Tablet* prove that high authorities are willing to make great concessions, such as having services in English, permitting married priests to retain their offices,

* *Freethinker*, August 9, p. 255.

† Quite recently a township where the Catholics are in the majority voted a large grant of money to the Catholic school, refusing a single cent to all others.

‡ Mr. Morley, in an article in the *Fortnightly* some time ago, showed that within five years over two millions and a quarter sterling passed by gifts and bequests into the hands of the Catholic Church in France.

etc., if only "the Anglican schism" can be healed. Naturally those who rely on faith must gravitate towards the Mother Church which through the ages has been its great bulwark, and the Ritualist finds his ideas and aspirations most consistently carried out in the doctrine and practice of Rome.

Nor are the pretensions of the Catholic Church more irrational than those of other supernaturalists. It is quite as easy to believe in an infallible interpreter as in an infallible book. The miracles of the Church are even better attested than those of the Bible. If more direct in its antagonism to science, Catholicism is more favorable to art than Protestantism. The doctrine of purgatory is more comforting than the crude division of heaven and hell. Priestly absolution is as reasonable as redemption from sin through the blood of an innocent person. Offering up incense is more agreeable and not more senseless than praying. A crucified God is just as absurd as an immaculate Virgin Mother. The gullet that has swallowed the Trinity need not pause at transubstantiation.

The truth is, the Protestantism that clings to the Bible is in an untenable position. It goes in for a compromise between sense and nonsense. Reason may be used, but it must not reject revelation. No wonder it has not extended beyond the limits it reached at the Reformation. The right of private judgment which it asserted, when fairly carried out leads straight to Free thought, and Free thought is the one bulwark against the sacerdotal pretensions which find their ultimate expression in Popery.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

BEECHER ignores the fundamental doctrine of the Atonement. He has characterised the blood-shedding of the Son of God for the expiation of human guilt and the putting away of sin (Heb ix., 25) as "the religion of the shambles."

TALMAGE has been expatiating on big earthquakes, cyclones, floods and huge disasters generally. He says: "Our world has had a rough time since by the hand of God it was bowled out into space. It is an epileptic earth. Convulsion after convulsion. . . . Our world has by sin been damaged in its internal machinery, and ever and anon the furnaces have burst, and the walking beams of the mountains have broken, and the islands have shipped a sea, and the great hulk of the world has been jarred with accidents that ever and anon threatened immediate demolition." We should very much like to know how sin damaged the internal machinery of the earth, and scientific men would be glad of an accurate account of the said machinery, which seems much more easily accessible to the religious imagination than to scientific investigators. Does Talmage imagine that the earth revolves on a steel axis surrounded by works like those of a watch or a steamship? When Eve bit the apple did the wheels instantly get rusty and begin to creak? And was Christ's death of no avail in repairing and re-oiling the mechanism and giving it a fresh start?

THE Lord's chosen are as liable to be visited by the chastening hand of their merciful Father in Australia as at home. The wife of the Rev. W. de Carter, of Melrose, has eloped with a member of the choir, compelling the afflicted minister to air his grievances in the divorce court at Adelaide.

GOD blesses Ahmedaugger in India with occasional plagues of rats which devour the crops and ruin the peasants. Government pays half a rupee for every hundred rats slaughtered. Nearly two million of rats have thus been killed and paid for, but the peasants will not take part in the work of destruction any longer because they have become convinced that the rats are the spirits of the people who died in the famine of 1876-7. Popular superstition, whether heathen or Christian, is usually a great hindrance to rational schemes for promoting human welfare.

SOME of the native journals are ascribing the late earthquakes in Bengal to the sins of their European rulers. As the shocks only affected the parts under the jurisdiction of Sir Rivers Thompson, the more superstitious consider that this is a direct supernatural or animistic protest against his administration; Mother Earth is endeavoring to throw it off, and her efforts are earthquakes!

THE inhabitants of the Caroline Islands, so beloved by Prince Bismarck, believe that epidemics result from God being ill. Judging from the cholera returns from Spain, he must be having a bad spell this summer.

PERHAPS a mistake was made last week in giving the Rev. Joseph Cook the championship as an inventor of untruths. The editor of the *Catholic Union and Times* makes this astonish-

ing statement: "There is no boon—of liberty, or of learning, or of art—which men enjoy to-day for which they are not indebted to the Church of Rome." Take out the word *not* in this quotation and it might bear the test of examination in the light of facts. As it stands, it is the reverse of truth.—*Truthseeker*.

THE Irish correspondent of the *Nonconformist* states that a Dublin clergyman of the name of Good having preached an anti-ritualist sermon, was solicited to have it printed and published. In a weak moment he consented, and it has been discovered that the much-admired sermon was cribbed from Spurgeon. Mr. Good, in attacking the Ritualists, seems to

"Compound for sins he is inclined to
By damning those he has no mind to."

THE Massachusetts Volunteer Militia have got up a new sensation. On Sundays they fire "Nearer my God to thee" with an artillery accompaniment—at least so say the American papers.

WILL some royalist send a little "blue blood," and a Salvation Army captain a small vial of the "blood of the Lamb," both for microscopic examination? We have not yet heard that either article has been scientifically examined. N.B.—A little of the grace of God or oil of the Holy Ghost may be sent at the same time; also a transmogrified wafer and a drop of extreme unction.—*Liberator*.

THESE articles, friend Symes, are only to be discerned by the spectacles of faith, which rarely fit eyes used to the telescope and microscope.

THE *Practical Christian* shows us what it means by practical Christianity. In a sketch directed against Socialism and unbelief it describes how an atheistic seducer and his young victim are "united at the Hall of Science, on the principles of social harmony." The unbelieving Socialist cruelly deserts the girl and her infant, and she dies broken-hearted in a mad-house. The Socialist betrayer then dances merrily in the Hall of Science on the Sunday night with a courtesan and makes unfeeling remarks. The Hall of Science, we may remark for the benefit of the readers of the *Practical Christian*, is not a Socialist establishment, and sham substitutes for the legal and binding ceremony of marriage are not celebrated there. But we see that the "practical Christianity" of the present day retains its ancient characteristics and resorts as readily as ever to the vilest slanders to achieve its godly ends. Pious lies and calumnies are welcomed in proportion to their gross shamefulness and reckless audacity. Christian editors seem to know no shame in such congenial work.

WE have a strong impression that the story in question is a hash-up of an old calumny against the Socialists. It bears internal evidence of belonging to an earlier generation.

SOME of the correspondents of the *Rock* are dissatisfied with the hymns and services of their beloved Church. One laments the "incoherent gabbling, inarticulation, and mock intonation so much in vogue," and another envies the Nonconformists their hymns, and speaks of *Church Hymns* and *Hymns Ancient and Modern* as "simple twaddle" and a "miserable imitation." This latter correspondent describes himself as deeply affected by the Old Hundredth when he heard it sung by a thousand soldiers in a way that made "one's hair stand on end," (!) and also at another time when it was sung by two hundred German sailors so impressively that an officer said he had "never heard anything like it before"—and "never wished to again," we think he must have added in his own mind.

A MINISTER in Cleveland rode to church last Sabbath on a bicycle. As he swept up to the sacred edifice, a large Newfoundland dog, belonging to the senior deacon, came lumbering out to greet the pastor. The bicycle struck the dog on the head under a full head of steam and run him down with a shock that could be plainly felt with the naked eye. The reverend gentleman took a header, and jammed his silk hat down over his ears so tight that he had to crawl through it to get out of it. The scattered leaves of a seven-headed sermon flew around the avenue like a theological snowstorm. The dog made Rome howl with his wails, and attracted a crowd of 300 people. The parson's coat was split down the back, and his trousers ripped across the knees. He pinned up the knees, and had to wear a pepper and salt sack coat the sexton loaned him. When he appeared in the pulpit in this garb the congregation smiled, and when he announced his text, 2 Kings xii., 6, "But it was so . . . the priest had not repaired the breaches," there wasn't a dry eye in the conventicle.—*King's County Wheelman*.

FRANK JAMES, murderer and train-robber, is attending the revival services conducted by Sam Jones at Plattsburg, Mo. Whatever else may be said against Colonel James, he has always been a pious man. During his whole career he never shot a man or stopped a train on Sunday, and no man has denounced Colonel Ingersoll in stronger terms than this same Colonel James.—*Truthseeker*.

THAT huge trading concern, the Salvation Army, sells towels worked in large letters, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," and clocks and watches on which is inscribed "every hour for Jesus." Probably Booth would like to stamp all our money with such words as "Every coin for Jesus," the "General" himself, of course, acting as Jesus's legal representative in the receiving part of the business.

THE Rev. J. Mackie, of Manchester, has been fined 20s. and costs for assaulting one of the elders of his church by striking him several times on the head and body. The dispute arose out of money matters, the pastor insisting on the pew rents and collections and the elder declining to allow this. The elder called his parson a liar, and the pastor retaliated with his fists. Thus Christians fall out in dividing the spoil.

"HOLY WILLIE," of the *Ross-shire Journal*, waxes indignant because a meeting of Highland crofters and land reformers have threatened to "starve out" those ministers who refuse to throw in their lot with the movement. That such a resolution should have been passed in the clergy-cowed Highlands is a hopeful sign, and no doubt many of the pastors will deem it more prudent to help their poor flocks in the struggle than to take Holy Willie's advice to "hold aloof from interference with all things outside the spiritual domain."

THE Chaplain of the Forces has christened with the Queen's name the infant daughter of Major the Hon. C. and Mrs. Legge. The child was decorated with a pearl and diamond cross the gift of her Majesty. This is something like "renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world."

WILLIAM HACKETT, a Salvationist, was charged at Marylebone with stealing a silver watch. A policeman stopped him as he was running away. The magistrate committed him for trial and he reserves his defence. A faithful return of the thefts committed by Salvationists, and of the Salvationist girls confined of illegitimate children in the workhouses would be an interesting document.

REBECCA JARRETT, who, together with Stead, the *Pall Mall* filth-concocter, and Bramwell Booth, is charged with conspiring to abduct, indecently assault and feloniously drug Eliza Armstrong, was exceedingly pious in her prison cell, spending her time in reading the Bible. Probably she was delighted to find that Rahab, the treacherous harlot, was divinely selected for salvation. The sexual filth of the Bible will prove suitable reading for as many of the crew as meet with their deserts at the hands of the law, which they vociferously invoke but dare not use against alleged criminals, and which they expect to be suspended when their own highly moral and religious experiments require it. Mrs. Jarrett has been visited and condoled with by Mrs. Booth, "Captain" Jones, and other Salvationists, who tried in vain to convey their gifts of fruit and flowers to the interesting saint and martyr whose *War Cry* had been cruelly taken away from her by the unfeeling gaolers. The Lord's own will be delighted to hear that "Rebecca's testimony as to the state of her soul was beautifully clear." She knows that God is with her in her trials though Satan sometimes nearly gets the best of him.

It may be noted that Stead, who is said to have lost his head over the adulations of the religious press, is a parson's son, and that he is "one of the men to whom Gordon communicated the vital spark of his transcendental religious enthusiasm." The public are beginning to see what mischief this religious enthusiasm leads to. Even the *Christian Commonwealth* has to admit that the case of Eliza Armstrong is "a very ugly blot on the banner of the Purity Crusade," and it deplors the "outrageous manner" in which "unclean experiments in the labyrinth of vice" have been carried out by the pious protectors of our girls.

THESE pious friends of innocence have debauched the public mind and slandered individuals in the most cowardly manner. Some of them have also threatened to charge men of position with the most shameful crimes if they themselves are not allowed immunity from prosecution. If some of them received ten years' penal servitude for this grave offence pious purity crusaders might receive a sobering and salutary shock.

WHILE the Salvation Army were offering up prayers that God would deliver the general and chief director (Mr. Bramwell Booth) from the assaults of the Devil, a "Curate in charge" writes to the *Guardian* asking the archbishops to compose and appoint a suitable prayer for the defence of the Church. As the archbishops may hesitate we will try and supply the curate ourselves. Will this do?—We beseech thee, O God of Jacob, to enlighten the new electors on the advantage of paying seven or eight millions to thy devoted clergy. Stir up the peoples' minds, O Lord, to be punctual with their tithes. Cast out all Atheists from Parliament, O Lord, and visit all Freethinkers with thy wrath. Remove the Grand Old Man from Midlothian, and let the place of Joseph Chamberlain know him no more. We ask these mercies in the name of thine and Mary's son, to whom with thee and the holy pigeon be all honor and glory. Amen!

WE see from the *Bazaar* that an ecclesiastic wishes to exchange

a "cassock, new; fit gentleman 5 feet 9 inches, for a 'pedigree pup.'" The sacrilegious wretch who would swap a holy church vestment for a pedigree pup is only to be put on a par with the unfeeling fool who would part with a pedigree pup to obtain a parson's gown.

A LABORER named Peter Lunan, who said he was starving, has been sentenced to imprisonment for 40 days for taking three apples from a garden. A severe sentence, is it not, good Christian friends? But your God, remember, evicted Adam and Eve for life for taking an apple, and at the same time he also sentenced their numerous posterity to thousands of years of banishment, hardship and misery on earth, and an eternity of torture in hell. He would have shown more mercy if he had carried out his original threat of promptly executing the pair of criminals.

THE Rev. William Wayman, rector of Groton, is rather particular about his property. A girl having broken through a fence into his meadow, he had the satisfaction of taking her before the magistrates, who committed her to prison for one month with hard labor for this heinous sacrilege.

LORD VIVIAN is a luxurious idler who keeps a yacht. He is also strictly pious, and imagines it to be part of the seamen's duty to pray with him as well as to navigate the vessel. Eight of them, however, differed from him on this point last Sunday week, and were immediately discharged. These obstinate sailors differed from his lordship on this point also. They thought they were entitled to a week's notice or a week's wages, and the magistrates have fortunately sustained their opinion. Lord Vivian has had to shell out, and in future he will know that he only employs seamen for navigation on earthly waters, and has no right to compel them to receive lessons in the art of navigating the skies.

THE children of "men of God" frequently do not turn out bright examples to the church. This is the case with Charles J. Watts, son of the Rev. Watts, of Kirtling, Newmarket, who has been committed to trial on a charge of theft.

WE have received the following letter from the illustrious Samuel Kinns:—

"The College, Highbury New Park.

"September 3rd, 1885.

"Sir,—I have had sent me a cutting from your paper of May 16th, in which you say that I threatened you with a prosecution for libel for criticising a 'published book.' I beg to say that this is a direct untruth, the article which led me to write to you was a personal attack and not a criticism upon any book. It commenced 'That religious impostor Dr. Kinns.' Now sir, I beg to repeat that if you again call me an 'impostor' you will do so at your peril.—I am sir, yours obediently,

SAMUEL KINNS."

Samuel Kinns is a great man, a wonderful man; but like other geniuses he has his weaknesses. Anybody can see how touchy he is, for instance. But the Lord himself is a victim to that vice, and perhaps Samuel Kinns is rather proud than ashamed of imitating his maker.

MR. PRICE is "confident" that not one of the five million sermons preached annually in England sets forth the Gospel message exactly in Christ's ordained way and in his words. "Joe the Rover," a Methodist preacher, resents this assertion as an "insult." He is perfectly confident that he himself is "strictly true and faithful in the delivery of the whole counsel of God." The confidence trick is the main part of religion. All the jarring sects, in the infallibility of ignorant self-conceit, are equally sure of being thoroughly in the right.

GEORGE WHITFIELD, after a large amount of Bible reading and prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, had absolute divine assurance that Calvinism was right. John Wesley with an equal study of the Scriptures and prayer to the Holy Ghost, was led to believe Calvinism was wrong. Yet the Holy Spirit was promised to guide into all truth.

A CATHOLIC journal in the South of France refers to Renan as "he who one day tore from our Savior Jesus Christ his holy diadem." We wonder what Renan did with the article. If he hasn't disposed of it yet we are willing to bid for it. It would look well over our office mantle-piece, and we could exhibit it with pride to any Christian who might drop in to inspect it.

CARDINAL MANNING, in a recent discourse at Liverpool, said that "The history of civilisation is the history of Christianity, and the history of Christianity is the history of the Church and of its pontiffs." Then everybody who wants to know something of this interesting subject should read the last two numbers of the "Crimes of Christianity"—the Rise of the Papacy and the Crimes of the Popes.

"NEITHER civilisation, nor science, nor culture," said the Cardinal, "could make men disciples of Jesus Christ." Not a very brilliant discovery. Freethinkers have said the same thing for ages.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

OUR recent article in the *Freethinker* on "The Bible and Young Girls" is reprinted with some additions as a Tract under the title of "THE MAIDEN TRIBUTE TO JEHOVAH." Copies will be supplied at 6d. a hundred, or 7d. post free. One thousand for 4s. While the *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations are fresh, the wide distribution of this Tract will be a splendid blow at the Old Book.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 13, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; at 11.15, "The Vaccination Craze;" at 7, "The History of the Devil."
Wednesday, Sept. 16, Secular Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell; at 8, on "The Bible and Women."

SEPTEMBER 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Liverpool.
OCTOBER 3, Heywood; 4, Manchester; 11, Milton Hall, London; 25, Sheffield.
NOVEMBER 1 and 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall, London; 22, Halifax.
DECEMBER 13 and 27, Milton Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—E. Roberts, A Young Freethinker, Blasphemer, E. B., Gaelic Sceptic.

S. WADSWORTH.—Thanks for the information. You say our pamphlet on Randolph Churchill is a "hot un." That is exactly what we intended it to be. The Freethinkers even more than the Radicals, owe his lordship a heavy debt of hatred.

H. J. S.—Colonel Ingersoll has not deigned any reply to Father Lambert. Mr. Ball has, however, dealt with the "Notes on Ingersoll" in the *Freethinker* for January 18, 25 and February 15.

A. ANDRADE.—Thanks for the suggestion.

IGNORANCES.—The work is out of print. Mrs. Besant's "Law of Population," price sixpence, is intended to supersede it.

AN HONEST ENQUIRER.—The statement concerning Beecher and Ingersoll was copied from the *Truthseeker*. It appeared in several other American papers. We gave a reason for our belief that the statement that there was a gate at Jerusalem called the needle's eye is a modern invention, viz, that in the early Christian book "the Acts of Peter and Andrew" the first-named apostle is stated to have fixed a small needle in the ground and ordered a camel to go through. The needle's eye miraculously opened and the animal went through twice. Afterwards the miracle was repeated with another needle and another camel. Can your friend bring any authority to prove the existence of such a gate in the time of Christ?

W. FARLEY, Southsea, reports that Christian ruffianism is prevalent on the Common and trusts that Freethinkers will muster in force to aid in checking this.

TOM WOOTWELL.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. B.—In favor of self-mutilation are the texts Matthew v., 29, 30; xix., 12. Luke vi., 29, says that to him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Matt. x., 8, gives power to the disciples to raise the dead, and Mark xvi., 17—18, declares that those that believe shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

JAS. WATSON.—Thanks. Our readers cannot help us better than by sending us good newspaper cuttings.

A. DIPPER.—Perhaps you are right. Mr. Rossiter's lectures may be interesting, but we can hardly invite the Battersea Freethinkers to leave their own hall to attend his.

W. G. E. writes: "One of your readers has apprised you of the abuse used in Hyde Park. I have attended those meetings, and if all the abuse had been pencilled down it would fill a good volume."

C. J.—A good idea, but scarcely up to the mark in point of composition.

INFIDEL.—Mr. Foote's "Theological Essays" does not contain the Bible Romances. The latter work will be published in a separate volume when the numbers are completed. Two new ones are already in the printer's hands and will be issued shortly. Two more will conclude the series. "Crimes of Christianity" will be ultimately bound up in a volume. The paging is continuous for that purpose.

"ONE IN FEAR AND HOPE" writes, with reference to our answer to a correspondent last week, that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Bury St. Edmunds, from Mr. Mantz, St. John Street.

S. C. W.—We are not surprised. The sky-pilots are too fond of acting as little God Almighty. They are certainly the worst men in the world to be entrusted with the dispensing of charity.

R. BELL.—Your letter has given us very great pleasure. We shall be glad to hear from you at any time as to the spread of Freethought in your circle.

J. THURSTON and C. MAGGS.—The subscription to the National Secular Society is 1s. per quarter. Mr. R. Forder, 6 Cambridge Terrace, Islington, N., will be happy to enrol you as members. You would do well to work with the Branch nearest your residence, say that at Milton Hall.

MESSRS. BAKER AND SONS and A. HOLT offer to take 1,000 and 500 respectively of our recent article on "The First Woman," reprinted as a Tract; and other readers offer to take smaller quantities. The Tract is therefore put in hand and will be ready in a few days.

J. P. CHACE.—The reference p. 45 of "The True Source of Christianity" should be John vii., 15.

THE Catalogue of the Progressive Publishing Company's works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Naval Brigade News—Le Temps—South Australian Register—Bury Free Press—Liberty—Wexford People—Republican—Paris Morning News—Aberdeen Free Press—Ipswich Journal—Liverpool Echo—Dublin Evening Mail—Colonist—La Question Sociale—Financial Reform Tracts—Ross-shire Journal—Protestant Standard—Willesden Herald—Dublin Mail—Liberator—Thinker—Warrington Examiner—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Huddersfield Examiner.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

THE prize for the Comic Bible Sketch Competition (September 1) has been awarded to Mr. A. Smith, 87 Wardour Street, Soho, W. None of the other sketches are of sufficient merit to be highly commended.

We offer another PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Religious Topical Sketch suitable for reproduction; the competition to close on October 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column size.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a capital audience at the Bristol Street Board School, Birmingham, on Saturday evening, the 5th inst., to hear Mr. Foote lecture on "Our Girls and the Bible," and he was loudly applauded as he went through the Bible, showing that it was woman's worst enemy. After the lecture there was a good deal of discussion, but most of the opponents forgot the subject. Sunday's lectures in the Alexandra Hall passed with very little discussion, there being only one opponent in the afternoon, and none in the morning and evening. There was a very large audience at the lecture on "Good God."

"RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: the Woodstock Buntam," is selling well in Birmingham, and we are pleased to hear that it is doing his lordship some damage in the division he stands for. Many working men find it an eye-opener. They never would have believed that Churchill had talked such abusive rubbish, and changed his political skin so often, if the pamphlet had not given extracts in proof from his various speeches.

THE Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. is doing good work, and deserves the hearty support of all Freethinkers in the district. Members and funds are both needed in order to carry on a vigorous winter's campaign. If properly supported, the Branch would soon be able to obtain a hall in a more central situation. At present it struggles gallantly against many disadvantages. We hope the unattached Freethinkers in Birmingham will rally round it, and prove once more that union is strength.

MR. FOOTE is seeing through the press a "Bible Handbook for Freethinkers." The purpose of the work is to exhibit in a handy form all the worst parts of the "Blessed Book," its self-contradictions, absurdities, immoralities, indecencies, atrocities, and blasphemies. With this little volume in his pocket, a Freethinker will be able to bowl over as many champions of the Bible as like to stand up. Pains have been taken to make the work as thorough as possible, and there is no publication of the kind, not even Robert Cooper's, that will bear a moment's comparison with it. Mr. Foote has been powerfully assisted in the scheme by Mr. W. P. Ball, who has labored through the sacred volume with a greater patience than Job's. The first part of the work will be issued shortly. It will contain a host of "Bible Contradictions" printed in parallel columns, and will be a monumental proof of the Lord's bad memory.

DOES any good Christian want a Bible with all the bad parts omitted, and not supplied in an appendix like Don Juan's edition of the classics? If so, he can be accommodated for a consideration—say, to put it at a low figure, five thousand pounds. What does Samuel Morley say? Should he feel the game hardly worth the candle, perhaps the Archbishop of Canterbury would like to negotiate. Any intending purchaser may rely on the work being thoroughly expurgated, for Mr. Ball has cut out every obnoxious text bodily with a pair of scissors.

MR. SUMMERS, M.P. for Staleybridge, promises to vote for Mr. Justice Stephen's bill for abolishing the Blasphemy Laws, and declares himself in favor of perfect religious equality. Our friends should (we repeat, even at the risk of being wearisome) heckle every parliamentary candidate on this question.

THE United States Freethinkers are making preparations for their annual convention, which this year takes place at Albany. We note that among the delegates will be a negro, David S. Cincoze, who proposes to propagate Freethought among the colored population. We wish Mr. Cincoze every success in his task of exorcising superstition from the minds of his brethren.

A NOTTINGHAM correspondent informs us that "Captain" Wine of the Salvation Army has just been taught a good lesson. Lecturing in Sneinton Market, he denounced Atheists in general and Mr. James Hooper in particular; adding, that if he went to Mr. Hooper's house he would probably find him drunk in the midst of dirt. Mr. Hooper happened to be listening among the crowd, unobserved, and at this point he pushed his way to the platform, dragged "Captain" Wine down, and haled him along the streets to a snug home where Mrs. Hooper was cooking a good dinner. The poor Salvation rat was then released, after admitting that he had made a great mistake.

A VERY good suggestion has been made for the utilisation of the deserted London churches. Why should they not be opened on week days for free musical performances. Dr. Parker's City Temple, which is by no means deserted, is utilised for this purpose and the week-night concerts are far more popular than the Sunday performance.

THE *Thinker* of Madras ridicules the means taken to oppose the spread of infidelity in India, viz., by a freer circulation of the Bible, which forms the text-book for infidels. It says: "If infidel literature is to be kept out of India, first sweep it out of England. Don't skedaddle out of the fight in England and then think that you can in this nineteenth century blind the eyes and stop the ears of India with a stop-gap like the Bible which has utterly failed in its purpose in every thinking country."

THE *Baptist*, noticing the report of the Bible Society, laments that Belgium is divided into two camps—those who reject the Bible because its distributors are not Catholics and those who reject it because hostile to Christianity, while in Germany "a second Luther is needed to deliver the old Fatherland from the deadly Rationalism which is paralysing its religious life."

SUPERNATURAL SELECTION.

NATURAL SELECTION, or the Survival of the Fittest, is to a certain extent, in its results at least if not in its methods, in harmony with moral sentiment. As an inevitable law of Nature or sequence of event arising from the properties of irresponsible matter, it must simply be accepted as fact, and, in its practical aspects, as guidance and help. No one will indignantly blame impersonal Nature for killing off the weakest and the most ailing, just as no one will be angry with the cliff at Dawlish for falling on children and killing them. But if the falling rock is hurled by an almighty hand, if nature be regarded as controlled by a personal God, if the cruel processes of destruction, by which the imperfect and redundant are eliminated, are the special contrivances of an omniscient being, the moral aspect of the question is entirely changed. Looked upon as a method of Supernatural Selection by an intelligent overruling power, the infliction of suffering and death upon the innumerable victims of the struggle for existence, is a crime for which the alleged Almighty Power is responsible; for the end certainly does not justify the means.

The Bible, however, will teach us the true principles and methods of Supernatural Selection in its undoubted and thoroughly orthodox forms; and Christians who fear and suspect the conclusions of modern science will accept with reverence and joy the statements and theories of ancient ignorance.

Broadly speaking, Natural Selection favors the best, while Supernatural Selection accepts the worst. Supernatural Selection rejects the wise and prudent, and pushes forward ignorant babes and sucklings as the fittest recipients of divine grace. It accepts blind credulity and crushes free thought and unbiased investigation. Fitness for the next world is its abiding test, and not fitness for active intelligent social life in this.

The first great example of Supernatural Selection—that of Noah—shows us that in securing or preventing evolution God is more indiscriminate than Nature. The blind universe of things in its vast series of processes is more moral than the Bible God, who endeavored, and vainly endeavored, to remedy the imperfection of one piece of his work by destroying all living creatures save two (which in some cases are identical with seven) of each species wherewith to start a new but not improved world of living things. Noah was selected for his piety, and his wife and children shared in this survival of the most pious. But what principle, if any, governed the Supernatural Selection of pairs of animals is difficult to discover. The polar bears, and tigers, and dogs, and horses, and butterflies, and beetles were hardly selected for their piety, and mere proximity to the ark would not furnish a just criterion for deciding fitness or merit.

Perhaps divines will enlighten us on such points, and explain the highly moral and benevolent principles on which God acted in drowning all living things.

The Supernatural Selection of Lot and his daughters, and their subsequent conduct, shows that the divine selection is not a happy one, morally speaking. And we usually see the same unjust, immoral, senseless bias in the divine selection of favorites throughout the biblical narrative. Supernatural Selection gave us the Jews as its one chosen race, and it produced among them a series of patriarchs, priests and kings and prophets altogether inferior to the series of patriots, kings, poets, historians and philosophers evolved by Natural Selection among the Greeks and Romans and other gentile nations. Our moral sense is shocked at the Supernatural Selection which chooses and cherishes the polygamous liar Abraham, the unscrupulous Jacob and his wicked and unbrotherly sons, the meek and murderous Moses, the bloodthirsty Joshua, the assassin Ehud, the treacherous Jael, the harlot Rahab, the dissolute Samson, the warlike David, the muchly-married Solomon, the nude Isaiah and the other mad and filthy prophets of the Old Testament. We see in David that the "man of blood" is selected as the "man after God's own heart," and in Jacob that a fraudulent and cowardly scoundrel is specially picked out as the fittest progenitor of a divinely-chosen people. Violence and chicanery are the spiritual stock seized on by divine selection as the most promising material for evolving the religious credulity and immoral piety of the Bible. The elimination of the Canaanites and of heretics generally by pious massacres, burnings and persecutions, had to be prepared for by the selection of suitable men, in whom the needed ideas and beliefs could develop into a religion of hatred and slaughter by which the supernatural evolution could duly proceed.

Mankind is fast becoming aware of the unmistakable fact that Supernatural Selection is a discreditable failure. Man must ignore, and so abolish, this mischievous and fraudulent kind of selection, and must take the matter in hand himself for the benefit of the race, for the happiness and welfare of the untold millions of the future. Natural Selection alone, if allowed free play, would produce far better results than divine selection. The one has evolved a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Newton, a Darwin; the other culminates in a tribal Moses, a lascivious Solomon, an utterly impractical Jesus, and a "General" Booth. Nature's mode of evolution has given us science, liberty, security, constitutional government, progress, art, and hope for the future; God's method has cursed us with priestcraft, ignorance, hatred of truth, and a general spirit of opposition to all reform and progress. But Natural Selection is often as cruel in its methods as the God who is sometimes assumed to work by it as the expression of his will. As man improves in morality and wisdom, he will on the one hand oppose Natural Selection by alleviating, and where practical, by abolishing, the miseries of the unfortunate victims of the struggle for existence; and on the other hand, as a still more important matter, he will take steps to prevent the huge and constantly-increasing mass of suffering and the ultimate collapse of social order that would arise from the inevitable deterioration of an unselected race, propagated increasingly from its inferior and usually most prolific members.

W. P. BALL.

REVIEWS.

The Republican. September. G. STANDRING.—Up to its usual level. There is a portrait and a bright biographical notice of E. M. Macdonald, editor of the *New York Truthseeker*.

Lecture on Ireland, its Woes and Difficulties. By an English Lady. Morrish: Bristol.—A vigorous, outspoken and able impeachment of English misrule in Ireland, and a plea for conciliation on the lines of justice. One of the best pamphlets we ever read on the subject. That it sprang from the brain and heart of a woman is the most gratifying fact of all.

MR. F. G. WILLATT writes to say that he was the Christian Evidence Society's lecturer in Hyde Park on August 30, and to deny that he made use of any such expressions as those we printed last week. On referring to our correspondent's letter again, we find that it is dated August 26, and therefore refers to a lecture on the 23rd instead of the 30th. We regret having given Mr. Willatt cause for complaint. Mr. Engstrom had better look after the lecturer who preceded him.

THE BIBLE DEITY.

PART I (Continued).

"God is love."—1 JOHN IV., 8, 16.

WHETHER God had in his previous works of creation used all the nothing he had in stock, or whether the beings he had already fashioned proved so unsatisfactory that he thought it wise to employ fresh material, has never been explained; but at any rate he made man out of the "dust of the ground" (Gen. ii., 7). He made him in his own image and likeness, and admitted him to be essentially a partaker of his own divinity by breathing into his nostrils the breath of his own life. Wherewith this image and likeness consist has always been a puzzle to theologians. Man is, or at least has a body composed of parts, and God is a spirit without parts; man is a created being, weak and imperfect at the best, while God is uncreated, eternal and infinite in all perfections. The likeness certainly does not appear upon the surface. To get over the difficulty it has been supposed that man has a soul in which the likeness consists. But the only resemblance that I can find between the soul of man and God is that no one has ever seen or heard, or had any proof of the existence, of either. There is also another difficulty. According to Christian supposition, the soul of man is the actual principle of his life. It is the breath of God which animated the dust of which Adam was composed. It is, therefore, an emission of the substance of God, and to admit that the soul of man is of the substance of God issuing from him, again to be withdrawn into the divine nature when the human body dies, is the teaching of the Brahmans and not of orthodox Christianity. Besides, we cannot say that the soul of man is in the *image and likeness* of God if it is divinity itself. We are, therefore, driven to find the likeness elsewhere or give up any attempt at explanation. Were we not bound by the declaration that God has no passions, we might easily detect a resemblance, for the Jahveh of the Scriptures has, indeed, all the emotions which exist within the human breast. He is a jealous God, he loves, he hates, he repents, and he acts precisely as every despotic ruler possessed of unlimited power has acted ever since. He orders men to yield him obedience in some absurd triviality merely for the recognition of his authority. If they displease him he brutally punishes or destroys them; if they please him by a more than ordinary amount of knee-worship or psalm-singing in his praise he condones their most atrocious crimes. He strikes Uzzah with sudden death for stretching out his hand to support the ark of the covenant even though that action appears to have been necessary to prevent its toppling over altogether; but David, who composed and sang songs in his honor, is still the man after his own heart although his life was stained by a host of crimes, not stopping short at the most cowardly and cruel of assassinations. For worshipping other gods, the gods of their own people, he condemned whole nations to extermination, and, like a true autocrat, converted all their possessions into perpetual pensions to enrich the descendants of his favorite Abraham. But God has no passions, so say modern theologians; therefore we must invent some other description for jealousy, anger, hatred and revenge. If the author of Genesis had been possessed of the power of prophecy and could have foreknown the ideas of future ages, how different a god would be here described.

Man having been created, and woman also, they remain faithful to the ends of their creation, for, strange to say, exactly the same space of time (according to tradition) as the angels—namely, one week. There may have been some mistake about the first week, as that was before time began, and it is difficult to say what portion of an undivided eternity would correspond with a week of our measurement; but that is of little consequence. And now the Devil chained in hell is found upon the earth, and at once starts recruiting for fresh subjects. It is to be regretted that the author of Genesis did not know of the Devil's existence, and so laid all the blame upon the serpent. Here God manifests his love by greatly lightening Satan's labor. He placed in the middle of the garden, which was then the only inhabited part of the globe, one tree with fruit more tempting than the rest. This fruit he strictly prohibited the man and woman from tasting. He surrounded them with a variety of animals manifestly inferior to themselves, and especially inferior in this, that they had no power of speech. Among the lowest of these creatures

was the serpent. The Devil entered into the serpent; he approached the woman and spoke to her through the serpent's mouth. The woman was naturally surprised at hearing the serpent speak, and—knowing of the existence of no other creatures than those she saw—being totally ignorant that there was a Devil—was quite prepared to believe the serpent when he said that he had gained this power by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, and that were she and the man to eat of the same they would become like unto God, knowing good from evil. They were originally made in the likeness of God, but the likeness does not appear to have included this rather important branch of knowledge. The Devil is called the "father of lies," but this was later on. At the period we are now dealing with he had no children. He said if they ate of this fruit they would know good from evil. They ate it, and the result proved that the Devil spoke the truth. Now the eating of this fruit was evil, but if they had known good from evil before, perhaps they would not have eaten it. Not knowing they acted ignorantly, and therefore innocently. So this great sin of Adam and Eve, the source of all human misery through millions of ages, was only committed by them because they knew no better.

E. J. BOWTELL.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

ARE FREETHINKERS UNHAPPY?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Christians are always telling us what an unhappy thing infidelity is, and how very miserable infidels ought to be. I generally reply: "Well, if we have not heaven to look forward to, which is a very questionable place of enjoyment after all, as it is within both sight and hearing of those tormented in hell (Luke xvi., 19 to end), neither have we a lake of fire and brimstone to look forward to, where Christ himself assures us that the majority of people will go. On three separate occasions he tells us that *few* people will be saved (Matt. vii., 14; xx., 16; xxii., 14). That great scholar Isaac D'Israeli informs us: "The ancients contemplated death without terror and met it with indifference. It was the only divinity to which they never sacrificed, convinced that no human being could turn aside its stroke. . . . But though they did not court the presence of death in any shape, they acknowledged its tranquility; and in the beautiful fables of their allegorical religion, Death was the daughter of Night and the sister of Sleep, and ever the friend of the unhappy" ("History of the Skeleton of Death.")

How many million death-beds has Christianity rendered horrible by its ghastly doctrine of hell! And how useful has that doctrine been to the Church in wringing money from those who having led wicked lives thought they could atone for their sins by leaving their property to it. Now that education has enlarged men's minds so that they no longer will believe in the lake of fire and brimstone, the parsons tell us that Christ did not really mean a lake of fire and brimstone, but that his words were only figurative, and that a man's conscience would be like a consuming fire to him. Sir, it has taken the parsons nearly two thousand years to find this out, and they have only done so when the doctrine was of no further use to them. Whatever the parsons may say, however, we have the Bible itself to show that the lake of fire and brimstone was spoken of in a real, and not in a figurative sense. Revelations xxi., 8, is particularly plain, and particularly insulting to Freethinkers, as it places us on a par with the vilest of mankind. It is worth giving in full: "But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." I think the "liars" in this precious verse must include the parsons, who tell us that this fire and brimstone business is only a figurative style of speaking.—I am, sir, yours truly,

J. E. ROOSE.

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PROFANE JOKES.

A PRECOCIOUS child, who had only just mastered her catechism, confessed herself disappointed because, she said, "Though I obey the fifth commandment and honor my papa and mamma, yet my days are not a bit longer in the land, because I am still put to bed at seven o'clock.

SAM, just back from his first voyage, was telling his mother about a terrible storm, and how the sea ran mountains high, taxing the utmost endeavors of the crew to manage the ship. "Ah, but you see," said the pious old dame, laying her hand softly on his, "there was One at the helm—" "Lor' bless you, mother," he exclaimed, energetically slapping his knee, "sometimes there were five or six."

SATAN IN DENMARK.—The bicycle is a great novelty in Northern Denmark. Not long ago a wheelman was riding along at night in that region with lighted lantern, when he met a countryman. The man was stricken with terror and fell upon his knees, in which position he was found by a belated letter carrier. "What is the matter?" the postman asked. "What, indeed?" stammered the peasant; "the Devil has just gone by on a windmill, and God have mercy upon me."

A BENEVOLENT clergyman was arguing with a fascinating but sceptical young widow, and endeavoring to instill into her receptive mind a belief in the doctrines of revealed religion. "That our belief is natural and necessary," he said, "is shown by the fact that we invariably rely upon it in the times of pain or peril. When a man is in great trouble or distress he instinctively and invariably calls upon the Sacred Name." "That is true," thoughtfully replied the widow; "whenever my dear James had a stove to put up, and the pipe tumbled down in a heap on his head, he always swore."

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Sabbatarianism in Liverpool. By S. Britton,

Prisoner for Blasphemy. XV. By G. W. Foote.

Pope Joan. By J. M. Wheeler.

How Natural Selection Acts. By W. P. Ball.

William Godwin. By James Thomson (E.V.)

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